

# APA Tables and Figures Style Guide

**Official APA Style Guide:** [apastyle.org](http://apastyle.org)

**Citation Resource Guide for APA, MLA, and Chicago:** [owl.english.purdue.edu](http://owl.english.purdue.edu)

## Overview

Tables and figures are used to communicate large amounts of data or information in a manner that is easily understood. They are used for communication, calculation, display, or even for aesthetic purposes. Before including a table or figure, ask yourself whether this is the best strategy for sharing your information. It is best to be selective when including tables and figures.

Tables may be included in the body of your paper or in your appendix. The appendix (plural: appendices) is a section at the end of your paper, following your references. It includes supplementary information that might be distracting if included in the body of your paper.

Tables and figures that are included in the body of your paper are clearly titled and numbered sequentially (e.g., Figure 1, Table 1, Table 2, Figure 2, etc.). You must refer to them in your writing so that it is clear to the reader why they are included.

Examples:

“...as shown in Table 1, the response rate to the third email thread...”

“The response rate to the third email thread showed... (see Table 1).”

Appendices are assigned a letter in alphabetical order. They also must be referred to in the body of your paper (e.g., see Appendix A for more information about Student Learning Support at Ryerson University). Tables and figures included in your appendices are labelled using the appendix letter followed by sequential numbering (e.g., Figure A1, Table A1, Figure B1, Figure C1, etc.).

It is very important to remember that when using a table or figure from another source, **you must cite it**. This is done by including a “Note” directly underneath the reproduced or adapted table or figure. The “Note” provides a full citation structured as a complete bibliographic reference. You must also include the source of this table or figure on your references list.

## Table General Formatting

In APA style, a table uses a row-column format to convey information. Information that is presented in a table should not be repeated in written text. For example, if you are using a table to display scores on a questionnaire between males and females, you should not also report the exact findings in text. You should describe in general terms the findings, and refer your readers to the appropriate table for specific values.

General formatting:

- Include only the necessary information and sections
- Use a logical layout with a clear font and spacing
- Clearly label the table’s parts
- Try not to create multiple tables that repeat data
- Keep the style of tables and figures consistent
- If using multiple tables use the same language throughout (e.g., *maintenance rate* or *preservation rate*, not both)
- Keep *p* values to two or three decimal places
- If distinguishing between multiple *p* values, use asterisks or an alternate symbol (e.g., \**p* < .05 or \*\**p* < .01)
- Use notes to clarify points of your table. You have three options:
  - General note: To clarify or explain something about the entire table.
  - Specific note: To refer to a specific part of the table, such as a column or cell. Indicate a specific note by superscript letters (e.g., <sup>a</sup>, <sup>b</sup>, <sup>c</sup>)
  - Probability note: To explain how symbols are used to indicate *p* values in statistical work.

## Sample Table

Table 1

Table number

Table title

Column heads: Identifies entries in each column

*Response Rate of Recipients to Each Email Thread<sup>a</sup>*

Recipient	First	Second	Third	Total
1	4	2	7	13
2	1	0	1	2
3	3	5	5	13
4	7	8	6	21
Total	15	15	19	49

*Note.* Recipient 2 was unable to respond to the second email thread due to extraneous circumstances (illness). <sup>a</sup>The description of each email thread is available above.

Table note: Three types of notes can be used to avoid repetition in the table

## Figure General Formatting

A figure is any graphic that is not a table. This may include a chart, a map, a graph, or an image, such as a photograph or drawing. Make sure to refer to your figures in written text, as this tells the reader where they can find the figure you are describing.

General formatting:

- Disclose any manipulation done to the figure that changes their data
- Include only essential information and use font, spacing, and colour that ensures the information is clear
- Keep the style of all figures and tables consistent
- Clearly label or explain the figure's components by using a caption to describe the figure

## Sample Figure

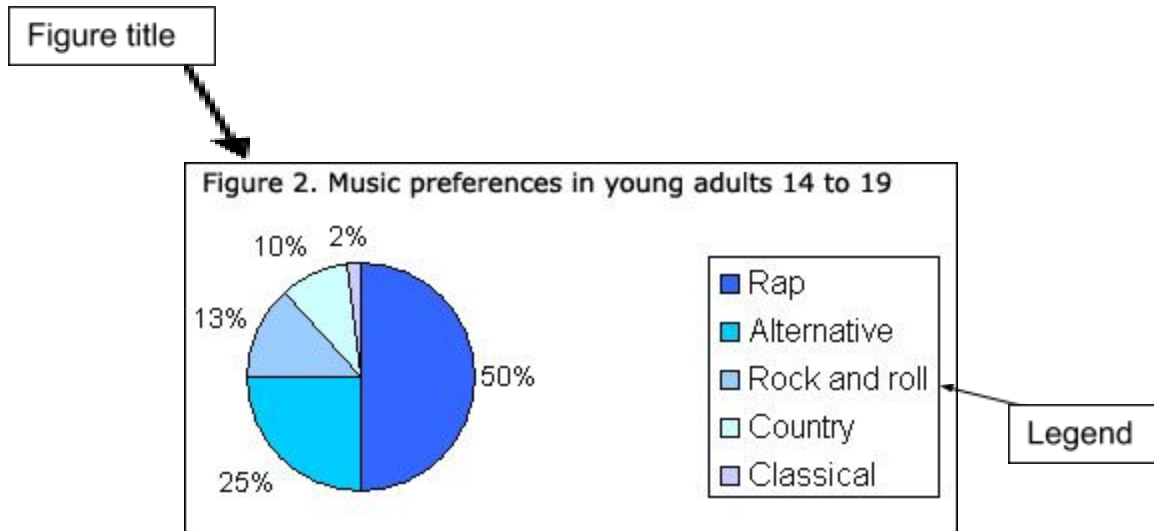


Figure 4. Music preferences in young adults between the ages of 14 to 19 (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Figure caption